

# HAMLET'S NOTE-BOOK

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WM. D. O'CONNOR

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# HAMLET'S NOTE-BOOK

BY

WILLIAM D. O'CONNOR



BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY

*The Riverside Press, Cambridge*  
1886

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## HAMLET'S NOTE-BOOK.

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It is a serious question whether reviews are of any real advantage to literature. They certainly tend to prevent its direct operation upon the public mind, substituting for consideration, instead of the book itself, an account of it by some more or less competent critic. This account is almost sure to be partial, inadequate, or incorrect, and is often disparaging or hostile. Worst of all, it can be so moulded as to deter the reader from any examination of the work noticed, which may yet be of exceeding value. One remembers the fate of those exquisite early essays of Emerson, — shelved at the bookseller's for years by the might of critical verdicts such as would never have emanated from the reading public at large. Doubtless much that is valid can be said in favor of the reviewing system. But however this may be, we cannot help feeling an angry disgust, and the disposition to have the whole thing blown to limbo, when we see, as we do frequently, a book of signal merit intercepted on its way to the public, given a bad name in advance, and its recognition hindered and per-

haps absolutely prevented, by the plausible misstatements of some individual, gifted with a certain knack at composition, who holds a place of vantage in a widely circulated journal or magazine.

These remarks bear relevancy to a transaction in which the late Richard Grant White appears as the principal figure. About two years ago, the *Promus* of Lord Bacon, a manuscript previously unpublished, was issued in print by Mrs. Henry Pott, of London, England. The sentences which compose the work were illustrated and elucidated by copious citations from Shakespeare, and the whole prefaced, and it may be truly said, illuminated, by a lucid and nobly-reasoned commentary from the pen of the editor. Immediately upon its reproduction in this country, it was reviewed by Mr. White in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and whoever wants to see a bold specimen of the diversified arts and methods by which a work of great and permanent value can be fatally prejudiced with the public, will find one here ready to his hand. The volume had been widely heralded before publication as an important contribution to the literature of the Bacon-Shakespeare inquiry, and much was expected from it. But when the public journals, influenced by Mr. White's reputation as a Shakespearean scholar, had spread his representations far and wide, and it had become known that so eminent a Shakespearean authority had

pronounced the book in effect mere crank-work, apparently making his assertions good through pages of derision and contemptuous abuse, the desire even to look at it was extinguished. In brief, a wide-spread impression having been created against it beforehand as a piece of mere folly and insanity, it fell stricken in its course without even having had the chance to get into circulation, and be judged upon its merits.

It would be difficult to convey, even to the most candid and receptive mind, an adequate sense of the distressing wrong such actions involve. In this case, the book had been the fruit of toil not easily conceivable. Judging by the fac-simile presented in the volume, the manuscript of the *Promus* is extremely obscure, and the mere task of deciphering it for publication was in itself one to shrink from. This was succeeded by the formidable labor of fixing upon the meaning of a mass of notes which are truly phonographic in their quality. Then followed the still more onerous task of hunting out from Shakespeare the host of passages which bear correspondence of one kind or another with the Baconian entries. Incident to these efforts, with the object of proving that certain locutions, turns of expression, verbal uses, etc., found in the *Promus*, originated with Bacon, was the perusal of over six thousand volumes of the literature of the period. In addition was the preparation of a number of appendices, admirable



for research and critical acuteness, and the composition of the noble introduction before referred to. Imagine, now, that at length the protracted work has reached its close and the volume is issued. In an hour, so to speak, it is ruined, and the labor, the anxious care and thought of years, are brought to nothingness.

I thought that when a book, and such a book, could be thus dealt with, it was high time to review the reviewer, and immediately after the appearance of Mr. White's article I wrote substantially what is contained in these pages, and offered it for publication. After considerable delay, consequent upon the determination of certain periodicals never to allow anything on the Baconian side of the question to appear in print, my contribution was accepted by a leading magazine and held for publication. But pending its appearance, Mr. White died.

This, I felt, ended all. I withdrew the manuscript, and was sadly content to let the matter go. But it appears that Mr. White had been of another mind. His literary executors have now put forth a posthumous volume, consisting of nine of his essays, and among them, to my indignant surprise, carefully revised for publication by his own hand, I find the review from the *Atlantic Monthly*. It seems, therefore, that he had intended to give this injurious article all the perpetuity book-form can confer.

Under these circumstances, there can be no



reason for restraining just criticism. On the contrary, the performance becomes, more than ever, a proper object for thorough exposure.

It was always a matter for regret and censure that Mr. White's writings should be less noticeable for their obvious merits than for their frequent suffusions of supercilious insolence. In the review under notice, the illustrations of this trait are copious. A leading instance is the title — "The Bacon-Shakespeare Craze." The Baconian theory the reviewer politely terms "a literary bee in the bonnets of certain ladies of both sexes;" "as to treating the question seriously, that is not to be done by men of common sense and moderate knowledge of the subject;" and he recommends with contemptuous jocosity that all persons convinced of the Baconian source of the Shakespeare drama should be carried off to mad-houses. For the very travesty of arrogance, this makes one think of Sim Tappertit posing as the Czar of all the Russias. If there was ever a man between John O'Groat's and Land's End who was the incarnation of solid British common sense, it was Lord Palmerston, and Lord Palmerston believed that Bacon wrote the Shakespeare plays. Therefore, according to Mr. White, he should have been trundled off to Bedlam! Not long ago, Sir Patrick Colquhoun, an eminent British publicist, read a paper advocating the Baconian theory before the Royal Society of Literature at London, which

was respectfully received and an urgent request made by the Fellows of the Society for its publication. He, too, according to Mr. White, should be locked up with the lunatics. We have generally thought that no sounder mind has adorned the annals of our journalism than James Watson Webb of the *Courier and Enquirer*, but it would seem a mistake, for he held that Bacon was the author of the Shakespeare drama. There, too, is Judge Holmes of Missouri, formerly a law lecturer at Harvard, a man of eminence on the Western bench, whose book on the subject a true Shakespearean could more easily misrepresent than answer; there also is Mr. Appleton Morgan, sound-minded enough to be the attorney of a great corporation and the author of several legal works, whose *Shakespeare Myth*, which Shakespeare himself, knowing all the facts, could not have confuted, has received the signal honor of translation into German by Dr. Karl Müller of Stuttgart and publication by the great house of Bröckhaus; and there are two of the judges of the Supreme Court of the United States, well understood in private circles as having long given their adhesion to the Baconian theory — one of them the finest legal and judicial mind in the country, some of his decisions even recalling the masculine breadth, the grasp of principle, the lucidity and comprehensiveness of Marshall. And yet Mr. White could talk about mad-houses!

Of course, having set down men of such distinction as crazy, no wonder that this meek and lowly philosopher, under the guidance of his ruling passion for insult, should not have treated Mrs. Pott or her book with common decency. From first to last, both lady and volume are veiled with a whirling shower of disdainful epithets and adjectives, of which "ridiculously absurd," "absurdity," "foolish fuss," "amazing assertion," "amazing inference," "frantic fancy," "extreme of ignorance," and "staring ineptness and puerility," are quotable specimens. Amidst this objurgatory bobbery, injurious remarks are thrown in from time to time like projectiles. "It seems very strange to be obliged to treat such fancies with a semblance of respect," sadly observes the tormentor in one place. In another he declares that "Mrs. Pott's Book may not be treated with patience, hardly with decorum." And at the outset, he sneeringly alludes to Miss Delia Bacon and Mrs. Pott as "rival female critics" to "the lady of the last century who decided that it was Ben Jonson who 'wrote Shikspur,'" his zeal for insult here leading him into the smallness of deliberate inaccuracy. The allusion is to the amusing farce of Garrick's friend, the Rev. Mr. Townley, *High Life Below Stairs*, in which the fun turns upon the servants taking the titles of their respective masters and mistresses, and aping the manners of the London nobility, — a style of performance which

the dudes of our society and literature have since faithfully continued. The passage is as follows :

*Lady Bab.* Shikspur. Did you never read Shikspur ?

*Sir Harry.* I never heard of it.

*Kitty.* Shikspur — Shikspur ! Who wrote it ? No, I never read Shikspur.

*Lady Bab.* Then you have an immense pleasure to come.

*Duke.* Shikspur ! Who wrote it ?

*Sir Harry.* Who wrote it ? Why, Ben Jonson.

*Duke.* Oh I remember. It was Kolly Kibber.

So it was not “a lady of the last century,” but a gentleman of the last century, who decided that Ben Jonson “wrote Shikspur.” But in his eagerness to affront Mrs. Pott, what wonder that the critic should have been disregardful of a mere minor fact of history !

His feeling and mannerly reference to Miss Bacon as “loony,” later in the article, is quite in keeping with the general performance. But the coarse gibe flung upon the grave of the splendid sibyl is little to the treatment she received in her life, in which Mr. White, in this article, vaunts his active participation. She had the misfortune to arrive at conclusions respecting the authorship of the Shakespeare drama identical with those entertained by the strong-brained British premier, and this it appears led Mr. White to endeavor to persuade her publisher that she was insane. He had recently issued his *Shakespeare's Scholar*, and had his full literary reputation and standing to enforce and sustain the effort. It failed, however, in so far

that it did not prevent the appearance in *Putnam's Magazine* of the introductory chapter of the work, which Miss Bacon had arranged, ere her departure for England, to have serially published in the magazine. Strenuous "literary" pressure, in which Mr. White was prominent, was then brought to bear, Mr. Putnam yielded, and the publication was abruptly discontinued, leaving Miss Bacon at the greatest disadvantage before the public, her introductory article having been just enough to arouse virulent opposition, without satisfying awakened curiosity. The next event was the loss, under circumstances which I consider highly sinister, of the manuscript, which had cost her the labor of a number of years. The reader can imagine the effect of the news of these calamities upon a nature so intense and sensitive as hers. But for some who are dead and cannot answer for themselves, and some who are living and deserve consideration, I would like to publish her letters, which Hawthorne gave me, that I might show the further distresses heaped upon her in a far country, where she still bravely strove to recover ground, and toiled at her book, often without food or fire. These were the experiences, to one stage of which Mr. White parades his contribution, which at last broke a heart, already sorely bruised by a great private sorrow, and overthrew a noble and most sovereign reason. The book when it appeared, despite its unanswerable truth,



its eloquence, its frequent splendid sentences, its marvellous sweeps of intuition, showed the ruin that had been wrought upon her mind, and gave Mr. White the right to cast his bit of insulting slang upon her tomb. The tale was once too sad for tears. But it all matters little now. Though her work proved to be a document in madness, the madness was of that proud kind to which, as Dryden reminds us, great intellects are allied nearly, and the volume, as Emerson said of it, "has opened the subject so that it can never again be closed."

Why the reviewer should have tried to close it is a question, inasmuch as he profusely declares in his article that it is a matter of perfect indifference to him whether Bacon or Shakespeare wrote the plays, — a declaration which manifestly leaves his composition without any adequate motive. But he even pushes his stultification so far as to wish that it might be decisively proved that the drama came from Lord Bacon, forgetting that such a *dénouement* would have put him in a nice position, after having showered all sorts of contempt and ridicule on Mrs. Pott, and called her a fool and an ignoramus for having ventured in her modest and candid way to consider Lord Bacon the author. It is perfectly immaterial, he continues, to know whether Bacon or Shakespeare wrote the plays, and no doubt this profound man would have thought it perfectly immaterial to know whether



Judas Iscariot or St. John wrote the Fourth Gospel. Bacon says (echoed as usual by Shakespeare), "the times give great light to true interpretations," and even Mr. White might have conceived that we get as much light to the true interpretation of a book from a knowledge of the sort of man who wrote it. Did he imagine that if Bacon were found to be the true Shakespeare, and the drama were put into collateral relation with him and his philosophy, it would not open up at once in new reaches of signification? Did he forget that its philosophic and artistic character and all its rich and lofty import were obscured for nearly a century by its merely being attributed to William Shakespeare, his vulgar and commonplace record having naturally limited the interpretation? Really it is of some importance, no matter what any Sir Oracle may say, that we should know what man, and what manner of man, wrote "Shikspur"!

Mrs. Pott's edition of the "*Promus*," which Mr. White's review approaches through these and similar outward limbs and flourishes, is preliminary to a larger work, on which she has been engaged for years, to prove Bacon's authorship of the plays, by showing in almost every department of knowledge and opinion the Verulamian mind in the Shakespearean writings. The title, *Promus*, signifies here a storehouse of materials for literary use, the manuscript being simply a transcript of one of Bacon's note-books,

dated 1594,<sup>1</sup> and containing over sixteen hundred entries of isolated words, phrases, Bible texts, sentences from Latin poets, and proverbs or adages in several languages. Hamlet describes it with comprehensive felicity. It is one of those tablets to which he likens his memory. Here are all such entries as he mentions, —

all trivial fond records,  
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,  
That youth and observation copied there.

As a study of Bacon's mental methods, at least in his earlier life, the book is invaluable. It is noteworthy that very few of the entries are used in his acknowledged writings, and it cannot be gainsaid that a great number of them, whatever be the explanation, do appear in some form, more or less direct, in the Shakespeare plays. The second clause of this statement Mr. White would scout, but it is exceedingly remarkable that while he is very stiff in denying that the *Promus* notes appear in any shape in the sentences from Shakespeare Mrs. Pott has attached to them, he does not at all deny that the minority referred to do really appear in the works of Bacon, although the manner of their use is the same in one case as the other! No wonder that in another part of the article he

<sup>1</sup> Since the publication of the *Promus*, Mrs. Pott has found reason to believe that a number of the entries were made at least ten years prior to 1594, though this date appears on some of the folios.

should consider "Consistency thou art a jewel" a foolish saying.

An equal proof of his intrinsic incapacity for dealing with the subject, not to speak of his ignorance thereof, is furnished by his ludicrous perplexity in regard to the uses of Bacon's *Promus*. He peevishly calls it in one place "the dust and sweepings of his study;" confesses in another that "why Bacon wrote down phrases like this, here and elsewhere, seems inexplicable;" and appears generally badly bothered by the memoranda. Quite needlessly, one would think. The matter is simple enough. In the instance of the "phrases" which he finds "inexplicable," they are obviously notes for forms of expression which Bacon proposes to use in literature, and they appear again in Shakespeare. A certain number of the entries are jottings of this or a similar description. Others were probably, as Spedding thought, connected in Bacon's mind with certain trains of meditation. Generally, the rationale of the notes is clearly disclosed by Bacon himself in the *Advancement of Learning*. All invention, he holds, is but a kind of memory, and the use of notes is "out of the knowledge whereof our mind is already possessed, to draw forth, or call before us, that which may be pertinent to the purpose we take into our consideration." They are for suggestion — "to excite our mind to return and produce such knowledge as it has formerly col-

lected, to the end that we may make use thereof." How they can have suggestive power, as Bacon says they have, may not have been apparent to Mr. White, who would probably have been equally gravelled to conceive how the mere perusal, hour after hour, of strings of words in the dictionary, could have prepared Chatham for those tremendous fulminations of oratory, which made Parliament, as well as "Judge Felix," tremble.

The fundamental misrepresentation in regard to Mrs. Pott's illustrations to the entries is in the cool assumption that they are put forward as parallelisms. Of course, under this rule, whenever the connections are remote, shadowy, recon-dite, or entirely lacking, the ingenious Mr. White scores heavily for his side of the game, and the lady is brought to confusion, all the more utterly since the cases of alleged "parallelisms" are of his own careful selection. The fact is, that Mrs. Pott in her preface makes an entirely contrary representation. She says: "It is desirable to state, at the outset, that the passages from the plays which have been appended to the entries do not profess to be in all cases parallels." Some of them, she continues, are put forward "to show identical forms of speech or identical phrases." Others are intended to reveal "verbal likenesses in the uses of words, in Bacon and Shakespeare, not found in previous or contemporary writers." Others disclose similarities in

thoughts, truths, opinions, antitheses. Still others exhibit sentiments and verbal peculiarities common to both Bacon and Shakespeare. In a word, the relations between the entries and the illustrations are held to be various and diversified; the paramount point being that these relations exist between the *Promus* of Bacon and the plays of Shakespeare, and not between the *Promus* of Bacon and the work of any other writer. It is evident that Mr. White's attempt to reduce the book into a Noah's ark procession of intended parallelisms was simply for his convenience in attacking it, and it is sad to think that so great a reviewer could have been so disingenuous.

His main purpose in the article is to discredit Mrs. Pott's book by proving that between the *Promus* entries and the Shakespeare illustrations, there is no identity of phrase or of thought. By way of "showing" as he says, "what and how great the failure is," he presents what he calls "some of the most striking" of the memorandums and illustrations. Prior to discussing his dealings with these "most striking" selections, allow me to present a few of my own, culled hastily and at random from Mrs. Pott's collection, in order that we may see whether the lack of identity in phrase and thought is quite as absolute as Mr. White would have us believe.



I send [this history] for your recreation, considering that love must creep where it cannot go. — *Promus Preface: Bacon to King James.*

Ay, gentle Thurio ; for you know that love  
Will creep in service where it cannot go.

*Two Gentlemen of Verona*, IV. 2.

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Thought is free.

*Promus*, 653.

Thought is free.

*Tempest*, III.

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Clavum clavo pellere. (With one nail to drive out another nail.) — *Promus*, 889.

As one nail by strength drives out another.

*Two Gen. Ver.* II. 4.

One fire drives out one fire ; one nail one nail. . . .

*Cor.* IV. 6.

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Qui dissimulat liber non est. (He who dissembles is not free.) — *Promus*, 72.

The dissembler is a slave.

*Pericles*, I. 1.

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Mors et fugacem persequitur virum. (Death pursues even the man that flies from him.) — *Promus*, 79.

Away, for death doth hold us in pursuit.

*3 Hen. VI.* II. 5.

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Dilucolo surgere saluberrimum.

*Promus*, 1198.

Not to be abed after midnight is to be up betimes ; and *dilucolo surgere*, thou knowest. — *Twelfth Night*, II. 3.

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Chameleon, Proteus, Euripus.

*Promus*, 794.

I can add colors to the Chameleon,  
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages.

*Henry VI.* III. 2.

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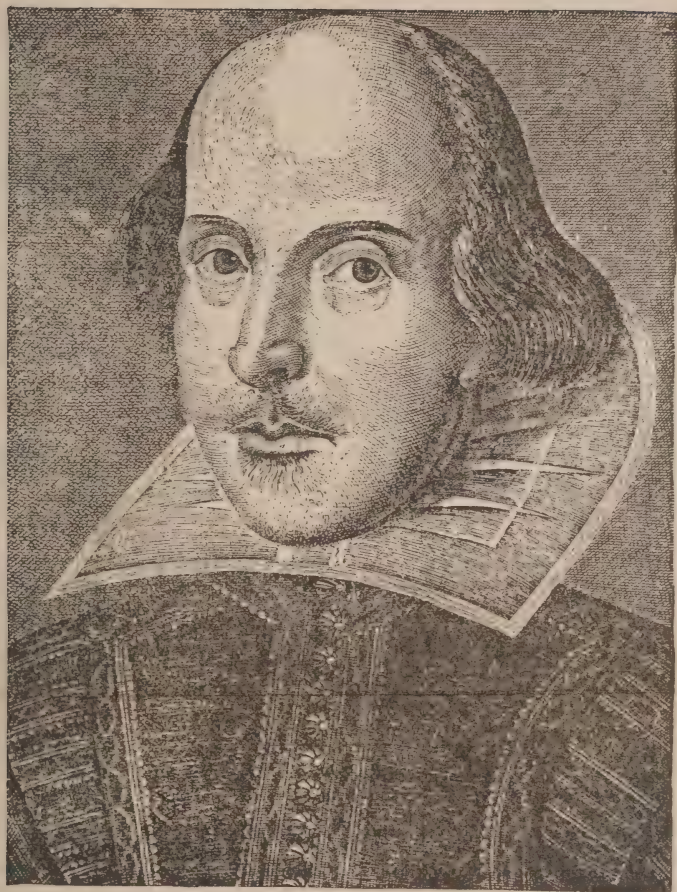
All is not gold that glisters.

*Promus*, 477.

All that glisters is not gold.

*Merchant Venice*, II. 7.





## To the Reader.

This Figure, that thou here seest put,  
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;  
Wherein the Grauer had a strife  
with Nature, to out-doo the life :  
O, could he but haue drawne his wit  
As well in brasse, as he hath hit  
His face ; the Print would then surpasse  
All, that was euer vvrit in brasse.  
But, since he cannot, Reader, looke  
Not on his Picture, but his Booke.

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AND

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An interesting contribution to the evidence in favor of the theory which would attribute to Lord Bacon the authorship of the plays which pass under Shakespeare's name. — *The Sun* (New York).

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NOTE. The portrait of Shakespeare on this circular is a fac-simile of that by Martin Droeshout, which appeared in the 1623 folio edition of Shakespeare's Plays. The verse beneath it, by Ben Jonson, is also a fac-simile from the folio of 1623.

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4 Park St., Boston; 11 East Seventeenth St., New York.

Argentangina — Sylver.

*Promus*, 837.

Celestial Dian, goddess argentine

A maid child, called Marina ; who, O goddess

Wears yet thy silver livery.

*Pericles*, V. 1, 3.

Golden sleepe. Uprouse.

*Promus*, 1207, 1215.

But where unbruised youth with unstuffed brain,  
Doth couch his limbs, there *golden sleep* doth reign,  
Therefore thy earliness doth me assure  
Thou art *uproused* by some distemperature.

*Romeo and Juliet*, II. 3.

Mineral wits strong poisons.

*Promus*, 81.

The thought . . .

Doth like a poisonous mineral gnaw my inwards.

*Othello*, II. 1.

Full music of easy airs, without strange accords and discords. — *Promus*, 86.

How sour sweet music is

When time is broke and no proportion kept.

*Richard II.* V. 5.

Seldome cometh the better.

*Promus*, 472.

Seldome cometh the better.

*Richard III.* II. 2.

A fool's bolt is soon shot.

*Promus*, 106.

A fool's bolt is soon shot.

*Henry V.* III. 7.

Black will take no other hue.

*Promus*, 174.

Coal black is better than another hue,

In that it scorns to take another hue.

*Titus Andronicus*, IV. 2.

To cast beyond the moon.

*Promus*, 629.

I aim a mile beyond the moon.

*Titus Andronicus*, IV. 3.

Hail of pearl.

*Promus*, 872.

I 'll set thee in a shower of gold,

And hail rich pearls on thee.

*Antony and Cleopatra*, II. 5.

There are quantities of these passages. We ask the candid reader whether there is no identity of phrase or thought in the samples offered? Let us also ask why, when Mr. White was selecting his "parallelisms" for discussion, he did not, in a single instance, select specimens like these?

He says of the citations he has chosen to present for ridicule, that they are "some of the most striking" in the volume. This is an old trick of criticism. "Striking" is precisely, in every instance, what his citations are not. In nearly every case, they are among the instances where the connections between entry and illustration are the least obvious, and these connections are still further concealed by his presentation of the cases intended as parallels, and sometimes by bold diversions of the reader's attention to points not at issue, on the principle of the English huntsman drawing the red herring across the field to break the scent of the hounds.

*Promus*, 2, is his first quarry: "Corni contra croci. Good means against bad, hornes to crosses." His first effort is to create an unlike-



ness between the Latin basis of the *Promus* note and the sentences from Shakespeare which Mrs. Pott has appended to it. This is all merely dust for the eyes of the reader, who can readily see that his principal concern is not with the Latin adage, but with the construction put upon it by Bacon — “good means against bad.” He can also see as readily that the illustrative Shakespeare sentences are all echoes (some of them verbal, some of them mental, but all more or less distinct) of the *Promus* entry. Mr. White, however, denies that there is any resemblance between them. Then why, in citing the passages, did he deliberately suppress this one — “We must do good against evil” (*All’s Well that Ends Well*, II. 5.) Here is an undeniable parallelism — the sense in both cases being that evil must be met with good, which explains why Mr. White left the line out, and convicts him of tampering with the text in order to prejudice Mrs. Pott’s argument. Here, then, at the very outset, is the sort of sleight-of-hand we catch him practising! Nothing could plainer show his animus. His method in dealing with the other passages is incomprehensible. He owns that the *Promus* note is an expression of opposition; he also owns that the Shakespeare citations are expressions of opposition; and the question naturally arises, how then can Mrs. Pott be considered worthy of contumely for having taken the same view?

The text from *Matthew* (vii. 6), “Nolite dare

sanctum canibus — Give not that which is holy unto dogs" (*Promus*, 11), is the next selection. The illustration given is from *As You Like It*, I. 3 : —

*Celia.* Why, cousin ! . . . not a word !

*Rosalind.* Not one to throw at a dog.

*Celia.* No, thy words are too precious to be cast away upon curs.

This is without importance or significance, Mr. White says, because the text had been known all over Europe for centuries — in other words, that being open to everybody, reference to it in two works is no proof of a common authorship. He considers this reason so cogent, that he advances it again and again in the course of his article, whenever Biblical texts are in question. Under the circumstances, it has not the slightest validity, as a moment's reflection ought to have shown him. The texts, proverbs, etc., collected into the *Promus* were of course common property, and if they were found in the works of the contemporary poets and dramatists, besides Shakespeare, his reasoning might have force. But, with the rarest exceptions, they are not, as Mrs. Pott's investigations have proved. They are in the *Promus* and they are in Shakespeare. Hence when we find the philosopher noting and the poet quoting, and virtually no others, we have a plain right, in ordinary good sense, to infer some connection, which will hardly be that Bacon kept a note-book for the use of Shake-

speare. As for this particular illustration, which Mr. White has the grace to call "meaningless," it is evident that the text says holy things must not be given to the dogs, and the play that precious things must not be given to the dogs, which would reasonably seem to establish resemblance.

Mr. White avows that he finds it hard to keep his countenance at the illustrations Mrs. Pott appends to *Promus*, 24, the famous line from Virgil, "Procul, O procul, este profani." His mirth, however, may be strongly suspected of affectation, for the illustrations are reminiscent of the manner and spirit of the Latin expression, especially when it is considered in connection with the scene in the sixth book of the *Æneid*, where it occurs. The dreadful rites are performed; the infernal goddess comes, as the gale comes, making the region tremble. "Hence, O hence! ye uninitiate! vanish from the forest," shrieks the sibyl, and as the companions of Æneas scatter and fly, she turns, her face blazing with madness, and rushes down to Avernus, followed by the hero. The force and passion of the sibyl's imperatives cannot be transfused into our language; the literal rendering, "Hence, O hence, ye uninitiate," being flat as dish-water. But the line, though it cannot be translated into English, can be imitated, and this has been done in the Shakespeare sentences given by Mrs. Pott — "Rogues, hence! avaunt! vanish like hail-stones! go!" "Avaunt, thou

hateful villain!" "Aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!" etc. These homely, energetic, familiar bursts, characteristic of Shakespeare, are in marked contrast with the manner of the more formal and grandiose dramatists of his time, and in fact are new modes of speech introduced into poetry by the author. There is no reason why they might not have had their germ in the Virgilian line, or, at any rate, why that line, so similar in intensity and free fury, might not have been set in a *Promus* note-book as a suggestive memorandum for their introduction.

The next example shows the red herring style of treatment. *Promus*, 43, is a note from Erasmus, "Semper virgines furiae" (The furies are always maidens), to which Bacon adds, "Court- ing a fury." The addition Mr. White judiciously suppresses, inasmuch as Mrs. Pott's illustration, "Will you woo this wild-cat?" from the *Taming of the Shrew*, forms a little parallelism not quite convenient for injurious comment. Her other illustration is Benedick's speech from *Much Ado About Nothing* (I. 1): "Her cousin, an she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May does the last of December." Upon this Mr. White draws the reader away with descant on the fact that Erasmus notes, *without* surprise, that the Furies are maidens, while Benedick notes, *with* surprise, that his maiden is a fury. Hence, says this artful man, no similarity. But the surprise

or composure of either Erasmus or Benedick is not the matter at issue. (Benedick, by the way, expresses no surprise at all.) The point made by both entry and illustration is that the maidens are furies. The assumption of connection, also, between the Baconian note and the Shakespearean illustration is strengthened by Bacon's addition, "Courting a fury," which is the position in which Benedick is eventually found with Beatrice.

The next passage which Mr. White finds destitute of all "connection or relation" is the *Promus*, 249, "Wisdom is justified of her children" (*Matthew* xi. 19), combined with the following illustrations: —

And make us heirs of all eternity. — *Love's Labor's Lost*, I. 1.

Earthly godfathers of heaven's lights. — *Ib.*

This child of fancy. — *Ib.*

The first heir of my invention. — *Dedication to Venus and Adonis*.

The children of an idle brain. — *Romeo and Juliet*, I. 4.

Mr. White obligingly explains for us the meaning of the text, but this is probably only one of his dashes with the Yarmouth bloater across the hunting-field, intended to draw off the keen-scented reader. If not, — that is, if he was sincere in his comment, — I can only say that he missed the sense of the entry and illustration entirely. What apparently struck the transcriber of the text in the *Promus* was not, as Mr. White says, that the progeny of Wisdom "prove their parentage by their conduct," but



the bold literary conception of an abstract quality having children of flesh and blood. Accordingly, the text becomes the germ of sentences in which the conception is continued and varied, and abstractions or inanimate things are endowed with similar relatives. Just as Wisdom has her sons and daughters among mankind, eternity is made to have mortal heirs, the stars earthly godfathers, fancy a material child, invention an heir, and an idle brain children. It is to be hoped that the minds are few that can fail to see "connection or relation" between such a note and such an illustration.

In his next citation, the reviewer not only slathers the red herring across the field with most unscrupulous determination, but uses bad language against Mrs. Pott with ferocious energy, and sneers and sniffs like a dragon. Although worthy of all respect as a scholar of rare attainments and abilities, and as a lady, she is called a "Bacon-saving Shakespearean," charged with "staring ineptness and puerility," and accused of having made a "flagrant exhibition of a kind and degree of ignorance of Shakespeare's writings which is characteristic" of such as she. God be merciful unto us, a sinner! To make these parlous words as good as possible, and leave her without a shadow of excuse before the Draconian public, Mr. White gives only a small part of her inept and puerile illustration, and suppresses the larger and most appropriate

portion. The fatal entry is *Promus*, 489, "A cat may look on a king," to which this judicial man, following the lady's text, appends as illustration the ensuing lines : —

*Benvolio.* What is Tybalt ?

*Mercutio.* More than prince of cats.

*Romeo and Juliet*, IV. 2.

What he suppresses, is the following : —

*Benvolio.* We talk here in the public haunts of men. . . .

. . . All eyes gaze on us.

*Mercutio.* Men's eyes were made to look and let them gaze.

*Tybalt.* Here comes my man. . . .

What would'st thou have with me ?

*Mercutio.* Good king of cats, nothing but one of your nine lives.

His fragment of these lines unavoidably admitted, Mr. White, like one uneasy lest the reader may follow even this slight trail, at once races over the field with his herring. He vehemently avers that in the old Italian novel there was a Tibaldo ; that Arthur Brooke rendered the tale into an English poem a year before Bacon was born ; and that Tybert, Tybalt, and Thibault were all names for pussy in Europe for centuries. Well, what of it ? We all know that Tib the cat was known as Tybalt, especially as Mr. White is kind enough to tell us so, and more especially because the information is in the notes and commentaries appended to a number of popular editions of Shakespeare, which is where Mr. White himself got it, and where Mrs. Pott was unable to get it, on account of her "flagrant" "igno-

rance of Shakespeare's writings." We all know this, and we are perfectly sensible of the force of Mercutio's punning reference to Tybalt as a cat. But all that is not the question. The question, as this slippery scholar of Shakespeare knew full well, is upon Mercutio's taunting Master Tibaldo, not as a cat, but first as "*prince of cats*," and then as "*king of cats*." Upon this small point, the fact that Tybert, Tybalt, and Thibault were old names in Europe for a tom-cat throws no light whatever, and accordingly Mr. White's elaborate display of learning is wholly irrelevant. On the other hand, Mrs. Pott's citation from *Romeo and Juliet*, with its prominent reference to "a cat," "a king," and "looking," certainly suggests — all the more since Mr. White strove to keep it shady — that the author, in composing the dialogue quoted, received random and whimsical suggestions from the proverb "A cat may look on a king." It is impossible to deny that the adage has the main verbal elements of the bit in the play, and it is equally impossible to assume that the author could have written the scene in the play without remembering the well-known adage.

"Neither too heavy nor too hot" (*Promus*, 651) gives Mr. White occasion to deform the sweetness of his style with sneers at Mrs. Pott because she appends to the entry a number of passages from Shakespeare in which the words "too heavy" and "too hot" are used in a man-

ner verbally peculiar to that author. He says that the saying was applied to a bold thief who would steal anything not too heavy nor too hot for him to carry, but it is certain that Bacon never put it into his *Promus* as a memorandum of a thief's audacity. What, then, did he put it there for?

"A ring of gold on a swine's snout" (*Promus*, 687) is illustrated by Mrs. Pott with the Shakespearean line, "A rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear" (*Romeo and Juliet*, I. 5), the illustration being mildly called by Mr. White an "absurdity." To make the absurdity apparent, he essays to bring out the sense of the simile in *Romeo and Juliet*, by citing from the XXVIIth Sonnet, —

Which like a jewel hung in ghastly night  
Makes black night beauteous and her old face new.

"It would seem, then," he says, "that the solemn figure of Night with her dark begemmed robe was suggested to the author of *Romeo and Juliet* by a pig's snout, with a ring on it to keep him from rooting." So that upon his reading of the *Promus* note, swine had gold rings put on their snouts to keep them from rooting, — a rather costly accoutrement, one would say; and this is quite equalled by the hocus-pocus process with which he gets a solemn Night with a dark begemmed robe, out of the negrine cheek and ear in Romeo's simile, and out of the swarthy and ghastly face of eld

evoked by the sonnet! There is no "absurdity" whatever in Mrs. Pott's coupling of the line with the *Promus* note. They are both signal examples of antithesis, and of the same kind. The essence of "A ring of gold on a swine's snout" is in the contrast of something beautiful with something ugly, and the essence of "A rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear" is in precisely the same contrast. An identical principle of creation underlies both similes and might a thousand such, all ostensibly different.

Mrs. Pott's illustration of "Laconismus" (*Promus*, 706), by the line "Like the Roman in brevity" (2 *Henry IV.* II. 2), Mr. White calls "fairly Irish in its blundering, as the Laconians were not Romans but Greeks." No man had less title than he to deride the glass-blowing process by which one shape of thought is developed with seeming irrelevance out of another, *Promus*-fashion. The Latin word "laconismus" before him, which simply means "laconism" or "brevity," and, presto! he obtains from it the conclusion that the Laconians were not Romans but Greeks! "Laconismus," being Latin, might easily suggest that the Romans, too, as well as the Laconians, had their brevity, as in Tacitus; and where is the Hibernianism in supposing that the word might have been entered in a *Promus* note-book as a phonographic memorandum for passages in Shakespeare regarding brevity, of which there are about a hundred?



Next we have *Promus*, 689, "Riper than a mulberry, — of a mild soft-mannered man." The illustration is "Humble as the ripest mulberry" (*Coriolanus*, III. 2), and being quite apt, is therefore suppressed by Mr. White, who has no better comment to offer than the sparkling pleasantry that Bacon probably meant the note as a suggestion for the actor Raymond's Colonel Mulberry Sellers!

*Promus*, 959, "Love me little, love me long" is the next selection. It is illustrated by "Therefore love moderately, long love doth so" (*Romeo and Juliet*, II. 5), which, being also almost as like the note as seal and print, is discreetly withheld by Mr. White, who offers instead some more wit of his own, to the effect that the *Promus* entry probably inspired one of Charles Reade's novels. Charles Reade, indeed! that keen, brilliant, alert, incisive intellect, who in another of his novels (*Foul Play*) has thrown the most searching doubt, from an entirely new point of view, upon Shakespeare's authorship, and is therefore, on Mr. White's theory, a fit subject for Bedlam! Charles Reade was certainly an unlucky name for Shakespeare's Scholar to conjure with!

The French proverb next chosen (*Promus*, 1544) is simply treated with ridicule, probably for the reason that its members are all perfectly reproduced in the illustrations.

Another French proverb follows, "Nourriture

passe nature" (*Promus*, 1595), which has for its first illustration the following passage: —

Those mothers who to nousle up their babes,  
Thought not too curious, are ready now,  
To eat those little darlings whom they loved.  
So sharp are hunger's teeth, that man and wife  
Draw lots who first shall die to lengthen life.

*Pericles*, Act I. Sc. 4.

This, Mr. White says, "as an illustration of 'nourriture passe nature,' surpasses all the Shakespearean jokes that I have had the good fortune to encounter." I think that he himself, as a Shakespearean joker, is also quite surpassing. It is part of his light Shakespearean humor to translate "nourriture passe nature" into "breeding is a second nature." The selection of the word "breeding" for "nourriture" is quite pranksome, I admit, but hardly ingenuous. It is, of course, a rhetorical artifice, the object being to lessen the likeness between the proverb and the illustration, at Mrs. Pott's expense. The word "breeding," with us, refers to the formation of manners, and as a translation of "nourriture" would make the proverb untrue and ridiculous. Sir John Chester, in *Barnaby Rudge*, was a very well-bred man, but his breeding had no force over his very evil nature, which continued as bad as possible to the end. Dr. Johnson, on the contrary, was a very ill-bred man, but his poor training never diminished the noble sturdy virtues with which he was born, and which in their solidity sustained even the mi-

croscopic scrutiny of Boswell. It is a pretty note in Mr. White to set up that Turveydrop is of the first potency! The proverb simply means, as Surenne gives it, "habit is second nature." Well, it is evident that the habit of fasting, Spartan-fashion, or in the style of Dr. Tanner, would enable people to more easily resist the demands of appetite: Marshal Saxe recommends that once a week, at least, food should not be served out to the troops, to render them, in case of necessity, less sensible to their privation. It is equally evident that the habit of having had frequent and regular meals would tend, during a famine, to make people cannibals, and the thing has notoriously happened a thousand times. Then what is there ridiculous in the idea that the picture of mothers ready through famine to devour their children is an illustration of an adage which says that habit is stronger than nature, — which says, in effect, that the habits of feeding are stronger than maternal love? The point is one which the reviewer might have chewed upon during the intervals of his fine Shakespearean laughter!

His cachinnatory exercise continues over the next *Promus* entry (1404), which is merely "O the," and is considered by Mrs. Pott as a memorandum for forms of ejaculation quite usual in Shakespeare, such as "O the heavens!" "O the devil!" "O the gods!" etc. It should be remarked that these ejaculatory forms are a

distinctive though minor feature of the free, familiar, ordinary, passionate speech which differentiates the Shakespeare plays from the more artificial and magniloquent work of the other Elizabethan dramatists, and might therefore well be the subject of a *Promus* jotting. Mr. White, however, in his superior wisdom, considers Mrs. Pott's piecing out of the brief a "senseless union of words," pretends to be immensely amused by it, and declares that the "O the" is a mere phonetic spelling of *othe* (oath), the first letter having accidentally got separated from the second! Unfortunately for this sage declaration, which appears to be derived from the "Bil Stumps his mark" episode in *Pickwick*, the manuscript entry in the *Promus* is distinctly "O <sup>re</sup>," the old form for "O the," and not *othe*; so that Mr. White's suggestion is perfectly gratuitous and disproved from the start. Furthermore, that the entry is really "O the," is distinctly indicated by the fact that it is immediately followed by another exclamation (*Promus*, 1405), "O my L, sr" [Lord sir], the shorthand character of this entry of course sustaining the idea that the preceding was also jotted down incompletely. Still further, the entries immediately succeeding are all of an exclamatory character, showing that the "O the" is one of a string of notes for forms of ejaculation. All which is extremely bad for our gay comedian.

These witty and brilliant successes reach their culmination in the discussion of the "good morrow" question, wherein Mr. White manifestly lays himself out to utterly demolish Mrs. Pott, and treats her and her statements with even more than his customary incivility. How less than little ground he has for this course, and what incredible ignorance he discloses of the point under discussion, a few words will show. The *Promus* contains forty-five notes (1180-1233) for forms of morning and evening salutations and phrases of compliment in connection with the time of day. Among these are "good morrow" and "good even," and as these, with others, are found in singular prominence in the Shakespeare plays and hardly elsewhere, and as the "good morrow" of the *Promus*, together with such an odd morning salutation as "Bon jour," appears again in *Romeo and Juliet*, it is concluded that this, so far as it goes, is evidence that the same hand that penned the *Promus* penned the play, and that morning and evening salutations, as such, were of Bacon's introduction (not invention) in England; in other words, that they came into fashion through the drama. Leaving aside the question whether Bacon wrote *Romeo and Juliet*, as Mr. White in his discussion substantially leaves it aside, there is nothing so very startling, or provocative of violent unbelief, in the proposition that we did not always use distinctively morning and



evening salutations; that is, say "good morning" and "good evening." There are fashions in salutation as in everything else. Just before Bacon's time, kissing and embracing were the forms of salutation at meeting and parting in England at all hours. (See the epistles of Erasmus.) Men when they met embraced and laid cheek to cheek, first the right, then the left: men and women when they met kissed each other. We did not always shake hands. But, apparently oblivious of the fact that such things go by modes, Mr. White fairly bursts into eruption over Mrs. Pott's modestly and simply put statement that the habit of using forms of morning and evening salutations in words appears to have come into vogue only in Elizabeth's time, and through Bacon and the plays. The "most amazing assertion" and "the most amazing inference that exists to my knowledge in all English critical literature;" "might mislead many readers whose knowledge of the subject is even less than that shown by the compiler of this volume;" a "self delusion," a "preposterous incredibility," a "frantic fancy;" these are the insulting phrases and epithets he thinks himself called upon to shower over this monstrous heresy. The prime beauty of this arrogant abuse is that when he attempts to discuss the matter, he shows that he has not a particle of reason for his conviction. As usual, his discussion rests upon a flagrant perversion of Mrs. Pott's state-

ment. His first argument is, *a priori*, that her assertion cannot be true because no civilized people "in the sixteenth century" could have been without "customary salutation and valediction at morning and evening." "A society so beyond civility as to be without forms of salutation would be one in which neither a Bacon nor a Shakespeare would be possible." This is flat misrepresentation. Mrs. Pott does not say that the Elizabethans were without "forms of salutation," nor does she say that they did not use words of greeting and parting at morning and evening, as Mr. White knew very well, since he knew how to read. She does not even say that "good morning" and "good evening" were not sometimes used, but the contrary, and it is she who furnishes the evidence of their occasional use in instances from Stubbs, Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, etc., which Mr. White borrows from her volume, and then has the coolness to use against her. Her position is simply that forms of morning and evening salutation, verbally apparent in themselves as such, although occasionally employed, were not customary at that time. She says that these particular forms of salutation, although in almost every play of Shakespeare, "were not *in common use*" until years after; again, that they were not used "*as a rule*" in the early part of the sixteenth century; and again, "it does not appear that [good morrow] had become a necessary or common

salutation ;” and still again, “it is certain that *the habit* of using forms of morning and evening salutations was not introduced into England prior to the date of Bacon’s notes, 1594.” These citations show the flagrant unfairness of Mr. White’s representations. The same unfairness is shown by his treatment of Mrs. Pott’s quite reasonable suggestion that the greeting “good morrow,” which she adduces from a tract printed before Bacon’s time (*John Bon and Master Parson*), was not necessarily an *early* morning salutation as in *Romeo and Juliet*; in other words, that it might have been used at quite an advanced hour of the day. This he merely scoffs at as “self-delusion” and a “despairing attempt,” asking in an up-and-a-coming manner what “good morrow” could have been used for if not as an early morning salutation. I answer, just what it is used for in the southern part of this country — to express in salutation the time of day up to dinner; that is, generally, up to two or three o’clock. Until dinner time, as any one who has lived at the South knows, a Southerner always says “good morning.” After that, it is always “good evening,” never, as at the North, “good afternoon.” It is precisely the same in England at this day. Mr. White knew very well when he was writing that if a London lady, dining at six o’clock in the evening, stops at her draper’s or jeweller’s at five o’clock, their salutation will be “good morning.”

Or was his ignorance on the point so dense that he needed the elementary instruction of the Dictionary, where he would have found the definition "morning . . . *variously understood* as the earliest hours of light, the time from midnight until noon, *from rising until dinner*, etc." The fact is that on this subject, Mr. White is as usual more rantankerous than rational, and not much less so in what he says about the titles of Gascoigne's poems, *Good Morrow* and *Good Night*, which Mrs. Pott refers to with the remark that they are merely titles, and do not imply current salutations. Whereat her critic demands to know with what propriety they could be used as titles, if they were not known as salutations! With the same propriety that *Good Noon* could be used as a title, although not known as a salutation. If Mr. White had glanced at the wretched stuff stout old George Gascoigne wrote and thought poetry, he would have seen that the titles of the verses in question had no reference whatever to salutations. In order to enjoy a good night, don't forget God, is the staple of one poem; the morning is a good one, because the night with its terrors and dangers is past, is the sense of the other. To listen to the reviewer one would think that nobody could say that he had had a good night, or was having a good morning, without referring to current salutations.

All this high-flying insolence is clearly due, as

the reader of the article very soon divines, to the intoxicating sense of the bloody massacre this Tamerlane of reviewers has forelaid from the start. One can see from the outset of his "good morrow" discussion, that it is all preliminary to one final stroke, sanguinary and horrible, which he has meditated, and which he at last lets fall, *rimbombo*, with a dark and dreadful smile of triumph. Description cannot describe the air of unbounded exultation with which he proceeds to finally settle Mrs. Pott's case for her, spreading out the catastrophe over the best part of two pages. We will now show, he says, according to "the Bacon-saving Shakespeare folk themselves" (oh, but this is withering!), that Bacon himself, if he wrote the drama, furnishes the most indubitable, the most crushing, the most fatal evidence that "English people, of all sorts and conditions," were at that time in the habit of saying good morning. Then he lets fly the ruin!

"In the Second Part of *King Henry VI.*, Act III. Sc. 1," he continues, "is the following passage: —

*Queen.* We know the time since he was mild and affable,  
And if we did but glance a far-off look,  
Immediately he was upon his knee,  
Till all the court admired him for submission.  
But meet him now, *be it in the morn*  
*When every one will give the time of day,*  
He knits his brow and shows an angry eye,  
And passeth by, etc.



“The bearing of this passage is such,” says Mr. White, glowering with carnage, “it is so broad, so clear, so direct, and its testimony comes from such a quarter, that it might be well to leave the point upon which it touches without another word of remark. . . . It will be seen that according to those who proclaim that Bacon is Shakespeare . . . Bacon himself declares that at the time when *he* wrote this passage, every one in England said good morning.” “It will be seen” nothing of the kind, and Mr. White ought to have been ashamed of himself. After all his hectoring parade of critical superiority, he shows that he did not even know the meaning of the Shakespearean text in which he passed as an expert. Yet it needed no Delian diver to have informed him that in the Elizabethan age people could “give the time of day” without the least approach to saying “good morning,” and here is the way they did it: —

*1st Lord.* The good time of day to you, sir.

*2nd Lord.* I also wish it to you.

*Timon of Athens*, III. 6.

Is not this giving “the time of day”? Here are other instances: —

(Enter Clarence guarded, and Brakenbury.)

*Gloster.* Brother, good day.

*Richard III.* I. 1.

*Hastings.* Good time of day unto my gracious lord.

*Gloster.* As much unto my good lord chamberlain.

*Richard III.* I. 1.

*Buckingham* (to Queen Elizabeth). Good time of day unto your royal grace. — *Richard III* I. 3.

*King Henry*. Health and fair time of day.

*Henry V.* V. 2.

These quotations distinctly prove that in the reigns of Elizabeth and James people could "give the time of day," "be it in the morn," or be it when it might, without saying either "good morrow" or "good even." All that the passage cited from *Henry VI.* shows is, that in the morning, far more than in the afternoon, people were wont to give each other salutation by saying, "The good time of day to you, sir," "Fair time of day, sir," "Good day, sir," etc. In point of fact the reviewer merely makes an exhibition of himself in this matter. He might easily have known that Mrs. Pott's position was not to be whiffled away by a gust of rude epithets and empty assertions. Her case is a strong one. She finds the salutation "good morrow" in the Shakespeare plays nearly a hundred times; in over six thousand volumes of that period which she has examined, she finds it only about thirty times, mainly in authors under the influence of Bacon. The inference is therefore manifestly not strained that the form was not in general use then as a salutation, and that as a distinctively early morning salutation it began with the *Promus* and *Romeo and Juliet*, where it would seem to be first found. Whoever affirms to the contrary is bound to advance reasons, not

abuse, in support of the affirmation. Failure to do this leaves Mrs. Pott in possession of her ground; namely, that there is a palpable connection between the forms of salutation in the *Promus* and those in the play.

This is the summit of our Mont Blanc, but it has its acme. After the famous victory won by his Shakespearean quotation on the "good morrow" question, the reviewer politely remarks that "we have, however, not yet seen the extreme of the ignorance which is displayed" by the lady editor of the *Promus*. "The extreme of the ignorance" is in her discussion of *Promus* entry 1200, which is simply the mysterious word "romē," and it is really a wonder that on this point, where she is clearly and even indisputably right, Mr. White should have stopped short of classifying her with the Scotch idiots or the cretins of the Alps. It has been suggested to her, she remarks, that the entry, being orthographically identical with the Greek word for *strength* (rome), may be a memorandum to connect that element with the name of Romeo, in the shape of making him a type of strong or violent love. As this is exactly the creation which is effected in the play, the character of Romeo being a new and splendid study of the physiology of young passion, with its "violent delights" and "violent ends," there is obviously a degree of quaint force in the suggestion, all the more since this presumable memorandum of an ele-

ment to be wrought into the type of love created in the figure of Romeo stands in the neighborhood of the *Promus* entries which reappear in the play. Mrs. Pott, however, rejects the suggestion, noting as an objection to it that the mark over the *e* in "romē" does not properly denote quantity, but is a sign of abbreviation, and intimating, perhaps with undue brevity, her belief that the word may have been intended as a hint for the name of the bridegroom. At this modest expression of opinion, Mr. White's rhetoric can be said to fairly get up on end and howl. A hint for the name of the bridegroom! "If what we have seen before is amazing, the gravity of this is astounding." He has already denounced the proposition as "the extreme of ignorance," and by way of showing that it is so, he proceeds, amidst much rhetorical expression of contempt and amazement, to assert that any one who "has the slightest and most superficial acquaintance with the origin of Shakespeare's plays" knows that the name was furnished by Arthur Brooke's poem of 1562; that it came into that poem from a story which had been told and retold for generations; and that it "was settled in Italy centuries before Bacon or Shakespeare could write it." The "extreme of ignorance" is undoubtedly a bad thing, but what may the extreme of impudence be? Let us see how a reviewer can handle facts. The Italian novel of Luigi da Porto, from which

Brooke derived his poem, and in which the hero and heroine are first called Romeo and Julietta, dates in its second edition from 1535 — an earlier edition, without date, having been published shortly before. Between the publication, therefore, which first uses the name of Romeo, and the play, there is an interval of about sixty years. This is what Mr. White calls “centuries”! He says the name was settled in Italy “for centuries,” when he knew very well that it was first “settled” by da Porto about sixty years before the play. This style of dealing with verities continues in the assertion of the fixity of the hero’s name, — a fixity so absolute, Mr. White would have us believe, as to make “a hint for the name of the bridegroom” in a *Promus* note perfectly nonsensical. In the older novel of Massuccio (1476), which appears to be the germ of the story, and has not much in common with da Porto’s version or that of the play, the hero is called Mariotto; in Painter’s rendering into English of a French version (1567), he appears as Rhomio; and in Brooke’s poem (1562), he is named Romeus, and occasionally Romeo. These varying orthographies charmingly bear out Mr. White’s bold assertion that the name was “settled.” It is plain enough to anybody, not having a contract on hand to murder a heretical book, that Mrs. Pott means that Bacon’s *Promus* note is a hint to make “Romeo” the name of the hero in the play, rather than “Mariotto,”



“Rhomio,” or “Romeus,” and Mr. White’s affected uproar over her remark is perfectly ridiculous.

What he says further about the “romē” entry is worse than ridiculous. It is somewhat surprising, in view of Mrs. Pott’s clear apprehension of the significance of the mark over the *e* in this word, that she should not have seized the advantage ready to her hand, and demonstrated beyond cavil the one only meaning of the entry, instead of resting in a suggestion which is of the briefest. It is plain that the mark over the *e* is a sign of abbreviation, for the instances are endless of its employment in Elizabethan and much later orthography to denote the elision of a letter. For example, in the often quoted passage from Meres’ *Palladis Tamia* (1598), we find: “As Plautus and Seneca are accounted best for tragedy and comedy among the Latins, so Shakespeare among ye English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for comedy witness his Gētlemē of Verona,” etc. Here, in two instances, the letter *n* is elided from the word “Gentlemen,” and the elision noted by the mark over the preceding vowel. Is there any doubt that “Gētlemē” stands for “Gentlemen”? Then why does not “romē” stand for “romeo”? Obviously and palpably it does stand for “romeo,” and for nothing else, because the mark over the *e* indicates the omission of a letter, and there is not

a letter in the alphabet except *o* which will make “romē” into a known word. Let the reader try for himself. The significance of the point is simply tremendous, and nobody knew it better than Mr. White, as his shuffling and blustering manner in dealing with the matter shows. Making due account of the mark of abbreviation, here in a manuscript of Lord Bacon’s, in his own handwriting, and in the midst of a string of entries reproduced in the play, is the name, Romeo! It occurs in a note-book, the title of which denotes that it is a storehouse of materials for literary use, and for literary use it is obviously there. No straw ever showed more definitely the way the wind blows. It will not do for the reviewer to assume that the mark over the *e* is a sign of accentuation, and skate off, as he does, into the far-fetched and puerile suggestion that Bacon possibly made the entry as it stands to indicate the proper pronunciation of the lover’s name in the ante-Shakespearean poem of *Romeus and Juliet*. The mark is a mark of abbreviation, and nothing else, and Mr. White knew enough of Elizabethan orthography to know how often, and just what for, and only just what for, the mark was used. For example:—

In consideraçon. — *Promus*, 1380.

A good or yll foundaçon. — *Promus*, 1453.

By by lullaby

Rockyd I my child,

In a drē late as I lay

Methought I heard a maiden say, etc.

*Douce’s Illustrations.*

May heap more harm upō thy head.

The sūdry shapes of death whose dart shall make my flesh to  
trēble.

The hungry fleas that frisk so fresh to worms I can cōpare.

*George Gascoigne.*

Abstract of the Deposicōns of ye witnesses sworne touching  
ye speeches of John Paget. — *Lord Burleigh's Papers, British  
Museum, quoted in Notes and Queries.*

Mr. White, not being able in the face of the facts to deny that the mark over the *e* in “romē” indicates abbreviation, and that *o* is the only letter that can supply the hiatus, could hardly maintain before a rational jury his dogmatic assertion that “romē” has nothing to do with “Romeo.”

He fares no better when he passes from particulars to generals, although on one point he is really admirable, and deserves a cordial acknowledgment of the cogent good sense of his reasoning. I refer to his brief demonstration that Bacon could not have possibly written the Sonnets. The considerations he advances are manifestly conclusive, especially those which relate to the palpable chasm between the lofty moral nature and natural chastity of Bacon, and the experiences of the court gallant and voluptuary which are mirrored in a number of these compositions. He might have gone further, and shown that their autobiographic revelations are no less incompatible with the history of Bacon's life. But although his reasons justify him in

declaring that "Bacon certainly did not write the Sonnets," he goes very fast and far when he adds, "and therefore as certainly he did not write the plays." His object is to make the one work contingent upon the other, so that when the Sonnets are logically whisked away, the unfortunate Baconian will be also left without the drama, and see with mental anguish both revert by syllogism to "that greenhorn Shakespeare," as Shelley calls him. The prosperity of this neat little scheme is quite balked, however, by advancing the fact that the autobiographic disclosures of the Sonnets, already referred to, show William Shakespeare even less than Francis Bacon; so that, according to Mr. White's formula, if William Shakespeare certainly did not write the Sonnets, he as certainly did not write the plays. To keep out of this scrape is clearly Mr. White's interest, and an item of his effort is to assert that Meres mentions these compositions in 1598 as "Shakespeare's sugred sonnets among his private friends." "Sugared," indeed! Such a barley-candy epithet might describe the verses in the *Passionate Pilgrim*, but not that array of mysterious and magnificent poems published eleven years after Meres's reference, with their powerful concision, their condensed expression, their vigorous reverted and foreshortened style, their sumptuous and often Gongorian metonymies, their stately masculine rhythmus, their dominant tone of sad

maturity, their rich and mournful beauty, their sombre tenderness, their prevailing sorrow, their dark resignation, their proud and solemn bitterness, their bursts of righteous anger and disdain. It must have been a very different kind of sugar that went round among Shakespeare's friends in 1598. To make the question of authorship as between Bacon and Shakespeare hinge upon the Sonnets is not quite prudent, when, beyond the vague and irrelevant reference of Meres, there is not one scrap of reason for assuming that William Shakespeare of Stratford had anything to do with them. They were not even ascribed to him in their publication in 1609. The title-page reads simply "Shake-Speare's Sonnets," — a punning inscription. It is not "Sonnets by William Shakespeare," which would at least be *primâ facie* evidence of authorship, meaning, however, no more than it means in the case of "A Yorkshire Tragedy, by William Shakespeare," a title-page which persuades nobody that he wrote that play. Instead, there is a manifest *nom de plume* — a compound name made from the suggestion of a lance brandished — "Shake-Speare." Under this title the Sonnets appeared in 1609, and considering their singular contents, no less than the titular ascription to a mere pun, the jump to the conclusion that they were the composition of William Shakespeare is certainly surprising. It is a jump that has also proved fatal to any rational under-



standing of the Sonnets themselves. William Shakespeare once declared their author, and the keys of the riddles were searched for only in the Stratford cupboards, when they lay in other cabinets, and in an entirely different direction. The first enigma which the prepossession made insoluble was the dedication: "To the onlie begetter of these ensuing Sonnets, Mr. W. H.," etc. Shakespeare having been immutably fixed as the author, it was concluded that the "onlie begetter" must be the person addressed in the Sonnets, — that is, the person who inspired him to write them; and wildly acrobatic have been the feats of guessing on this sapient premise, from William Herbert to William Himself, which last is a recent German contribution. To make these antics more preposterous, one finds upon examination that the Sonnets are addressed to or inspired by at least four persons, — a beautiful young man of stainless life; a beautiful young man who is a thorough libertine; a woman so fair that the lily and the red and white rose are brought into compare with her complexion; and a woman so unquestionably brunette that she is called black; four "onlie begetters" on the face of it! Then what becomes of the one "onlie begetter" theory of the dedication? Congruity, however, is nothing to your true Shakespearean, and despite the contradiction, the delvers on the false lead stubbornly toiled on. After all, prejudgments once barred, the

clew is a very plain one. The only begetter of a child is its father. By parity of reasoning, the only begetter of a sonnet is its author. The sonnets are therefore dedicated to their author. "To the only begetter (or sole author) of these ensuing sonnets, Mr. W. H., all happiness, and that eternity promised by our ever-living poet, wisheth the well-wishing adventurer (or person undertaking the enterprise of launching them for posterity), in setting forth. T. T." So runs the dedication. Who now are the author and adventurer thus indicated in cipher? The author is Raleigh, — *WALTER RALEIGH*; the adventurer the mathematician Hariot, — *THOMAS HARIOT*, his friend and companion, allowed free access to him during his imprisonment in the Tower, which covers the date of the Sonnets, 1609. The means and leisure necessary to establish these assertions beyond cavil, and spread open the meaning of the Sonnets, will probably never be at the command of the writer, but patient and candid scholars, better situated, will not be ungrateful for these offered clews. They will find them confirmed by the slender yet definite outlines of autobiography which the Sonnets contain. The allusions of the author to his overweening pride in himself, to his inordinate love of outward adornment, his jewels, his singularly costly apparel; the allusions, at another stage, to his poverty, to his physical lameness, to his advanced age, to his drained blood, and his

brow, trenched and wrinkled by time ; the allusion to his deeply tanned complexion, the ingrained sunburn of the field and the voyage ; the iterated expression of bitter regret at having been swerved from poetry as the great purpose or passion of his life, and diverted to motley pursuits and employments ; the expression of passionate satisfaction in the achievements of another poet, apparently Spenser ; the incredulous or ironical allusion, in vaunting devotion to the quest of truth as the aim of life, to Bacon's new-found methods and strange compounds of philosophy and poetry, as sketched in the *De Augmentis* ; the allusion to himself as having been one of the wardens of the Cinque Ports ; the probable allusion to that great Earl of Northumberland, celebrated for his beauty and learning, confined in the Tower with Raleigh, with one of his "Magi," his salaried scholar, William Hews, allowed access to him ("a man in hue all Hews in his controlling") ; the reference to the guilt imputed to himself, the public scandal, the irretrievable disgrace, the irremediable brand upon his name ; the reference to his expectation of a bloody death at the hands of the public executioner ; the lion-roar of the CXXVth Sonnet at "the suborned informer ;" all this, and much more, impossible of connection with Shakespeare, confirm the assertion of Raleigh as the author of these strange and splendid poems, — how strange and splendid,

how characteristic and indicative as an illustration of the Elizabethan age, full commentary only can disclose.

To assist this commentary, I will briefly add that the Sonnets make a leaf in the book of England's intellectual debt to Italy. They are largely a collection of personal poems, but plentifully interspersed with poems which are invocations, apostrophes, complaints, meditations, connected with the personification of a divine purpose, deeply cherished, though not always pursued through life; and the main key to them, and to much of the early Elizabethan literature, is in the writings of their contemporary, the friend of Sidney, Raleigh, Spenser, and that group, the noble and ardent Giordano Bruno. It is his *Eroici Furori*, a work of mingled prose and verse, which is in special relation. A word here is necessary. In our age, there are men and women who accept with composure lives of disaster, reproach, contumely, ostracism, the rancor of enslavers and plutocrats, the jail of Garrison, Krapotkine's dungeon, the prisons of Blanqui, Mazzini's exile, the gallows of John Brown, the torture and the scaffold of the Nihilists, Siberia, Lambessa, the galleys, the knout, the guillotine, all for the love of that fair woman in the Phrygian cap, with the broken shackles in her hand, whom we call Liberty. The sixteenth century in England and the Continent had a similar personification, pontifical

over a host of secret worshippers. It was Truth. She was imaged in the literature of her lovers as a celestial woman, a goddess. Into art, into science, into literature, into religion, into politics, through all the mazes of the False, this vision forever floated before their following feet; and they followed, although the inquisitor started out at times upon their path, although behind them stalked the headsman. In the *Eroici Furori* of Bruno (my statement is from old remembrance), the thesis is that absorption in mere amative love, the prevailing vice of that intensely amorous age, is unworthy of one so great as the human being. Be lovers indeed, he says, but love in subordination to a celestial love, the only affection worthy of the complete surrender of a human soul, the love for the truth. The search for what is true in all the domains of thought and life is the glory of existence; and then in alternate eloquent prose and glowing verse, he chooses for the image of this doctrine the great chaste huntress, Diana. We all know of the Dian of Giordano Bruno. He died for her, like a man, unfaltering, unrecanting, — he died for her the martyr's death of fire in the great square at Rome. After his visit to England, his indoctrination of the Raleigh group flowers thickly in their poetry, and his Dian appears as the divinity of their worship. A choir of unread or forgotten singers utter their hymns to this personification. Spenser, the greatest of



them all, weaves it into his *Faery Queen*. In his preface, he explains that he gives her the name of Gloriana, but shadows her as Bel-Phoebe, and again as Raleigh's Cynthia, "Phoebe and Cynthia," he says, "being both names for Diana." "Your own excellent conception of Cynthia," he calls it, addressing Raleigh; and in the dedicatory sonnet, glorifying Raleigh as the great coming poet of the time, and the only one fit to treat so high a theme as the *Faery Queen*, he says until the latter makes known his poem, let the praises of this Cynthia, or Diana, be thus inadequately celebrated. The "Rosalinde" to whom Spenser addresses such rapturous verse, explaining in a note that her name, "rightly ordered," will show who she is, a problem which has vainly perplexed the critics, is the same goddess; "Rosalinde" being an anagram, which, "rightly ordered," yields the words "or els [else] Dian" — the Dian of his master, Bruno. It is the same Dian, the *bella donna* of the *Eroici Furori*, that makes the personification in a number of the Shakespeare Sonnets; the celestial image of "truth in beauty dyed," whom the author so often reproaches his muse for having neglected. All this being so, Mr. White's destructive syllogism becomes as inoperative as a battering-ram made of calves-foot jelly.

"The great inherent absurdity," however, of all the absurdities with which he deals so brill-

iantly, he finds, finally, in "the unlikeness of Bacon's mind and style to those of the writer of the plays." Of all fudge ever written, this is the sheerest. Methinks I see our critic with his sagacious right eye fixed upon the long loping alexandrines of Richelieu, and his sagacious left eye fixed upon Richelieu's *Maxims of State*, oracularly deciding from the "unlikeness of mind and style" that the great Cardinal could not have written the tragi-comedy of *Mirame!* Could he inform us (I will offer the most favoring instance possible) what likeness of "mind and style" he could detect between Sir William Blackstone's charming verses, *A Lawyer's Farewell to his Muse*, and the same Sir William Blackstone's *Commentaries*? What likeness of "mind and style" could he establish between the famous treatise by Grotius on *The Rights of Peace and War*, and the stately tragedy by Grotius, entitled *Adam in Exile*? Where is the identity of "mind and style" between Sir Walter Raleigh's dryasdust *Cabinet Council* and Sir Walter Raleigh's magnificent and ringing poem, *The Soul's Errand*? What likeness of "mind and style" could he find between Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* and the unearthly bronze melodies and magian imagery of Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*? What likeness of "mind and style" exists between the exquisite riant grace, lightness, and Watteau-color of Milton's *Allegro*, the gracious andante movement

and sweet cloistral imagery of Milton's *Penseroso*, and the *Tetrachordon* or the *Areopagitica* of the same John Milton? Are the solemn rolling harmonies of *Paradise Lost* one in "mind and style" with the trip-hammer crash of the reply to Salmasius by Cromwell's Latin secretary? Could the most astute reviewer discover likeness of "mind and style" between *Peregrine Pickle* or *Roderick Random*, and the noble and majestic passion of the *Ode to Independence*? —

Thy spirit, Independence, let me share,  
 Lord of the lion-heart and eagle-eye!  
 Thy steps I'll follow with my bosom bare,  
 Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky! —

lines which make one almost regret that Smollett was diverted from the domain where he might have been a great poet, into the lower field of the first-class realistic novelist. Of all propositions I ever heard, this of Mr. White's passes — that a man must show the same "mind and style" in writing science and philosophy that he does in writing poetry! To make it still more ridiculous, it must be remembered in the instance under discussion, that Bacon had to exert the utmost diplomatic finesse to steer his philosophic thought clear of the insane prepossessions and prejudices of his time; that nearly his whole life was spent, as the preliminary compositions show, in painfully laboring out the phraseology which should at once conceal and reveal the

meaning of the *De Augmentis* and the *Norum Organum*, make them demiurgic with intelligence, and at the same time carry them over without suspicion, past the military despotism of his time, to the freer ages; and that then, when all this was done, they, like nearly all his other works, were written in Latin! The *Advancement of Learning*, with its guarded military reconnoissance as into an enemy's country, and the *Essays*, where, with the habitual laboriousness, the literary effort is to pack the thought into the closest compass, and the native mental traits are fettered by sententiousness, are the only main exceptions. It is manifest that one might reasonably expect to find a rather different show of "mind and style" between Bacon writing in his own person, under such conditions, and Bacon writing anonymously and unrestrained; between Bacon with his intellectual motions cooped up in his *History of Henry the Seventh*, and Bacon with all the tempest of his spirit unloosed in *Hamlet* or *Lear*.

Mr. White's next feat, by way of showing the "unlikeness of mind and style," is to make a parallel between Bacon and Shakespeare, after the manner of the famous parallel between Pope and Dryden. But it is not so good. In fact, his gymnastics in playing this precious game of hop-sotch are of the most grotesque character. Bacon, he leads off, was a "cautious observer and investigator," etc.; Shakespeare, on the

contrary, he continues, saw everything at once and forever, outside and inside, all in a flash, by inspiration, etc.; the fact being that the delicate, minute, painstaking, and absolutely scientific observation and investigation of men and things shown in the plays are patent to every reader! Bacon, continues Shakespeare's Scholar, was a "logician;" Shakespeare "soared upon wings." Bacon a logician! I defy any one to show me one instance of the major and minor premise in all his writings! Did the reviewer forget the blasting criticism on logic as compelling assent, but leaving things unaltered? Did he forget the famous rejection of the syllogism, carried in the profound affirmation that Nature is more subtle than logic? Bacon a logician, indeed! Truly it may be said both of him and Shakespeare, that equally they never argue; they decree. Bacon next appears in the parallel as with a perpetual bias to the good; Shakespeare holds "fast both to good and evil," "delighting in his Falstaff as much as he delighted in his Imogen," — which is news indeed. Falstaff, whom Victor Hugo felicitously calls "the centaur of the hog," is, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, and in the historical plays, held up by his creator to merciless ridicule, made a gross butt and laughing-stock, mocked, flouted, fooled, cudgelled, deserted, and dies with poetic justice a gruesome and melancholy death. Yet Mr. White would make out that he is a cherished



ideal of the author, like Imogen, inasmuch as Shakespeare loves evil as much as good, and verges, we are told further on, almost to "moral obliquity!" However, a few sentences distant, he has him bravely rehabilitated as "a moral teacher," and "ever moralizing." To one who remembers the Juvenalian blasts of *Timon*, the terrible and more than Roman condemnation of the sins and evils of his time in *Lear*, the marble justice of *Measure for Measure*, the immense and sensitive conscience active everywhere in the plays, the idea that Shakespeare has a less determined bias to the good than Bacon strikes me as a point in discovery not excelled since Christopher Columbus. Next we have it that Bacon asserts his personality in his writings, Shakespeare never, — which is "clean kam," for the whole nature of the author of the plays is revealed by them, and yields a reciprocal impression to the reader's mind, just as in the palinogenesis the rose yielded to the air above it, the glowing phantom of the rose. In earlier life, when all the future smiled for him, he has shown the kind of man he was in gracious and lordly characters like Duke Theseus; in later years, with all the problems of the disjointed social state, of impending anarchy, and of unintelligible Time and Life rising around him, sphinxine and terrible, he has shown his soul in the impersonated reason, the passionate interrogations, the sad laughter, and the deep in-

terior grief of Hamlet. I think that amount of judgment which has not flown to Shakespeare's Scholars, will easily see in the drama the true self of the author, even through the veiling of the dramatic form. In regard to the next parallel, in which Bacon appears as the "most exact," and Shakespeare the "most inexact" of writers, I will only remark that I suppose this is the reason why they both make the very same mistakes in their science and literary allusions, and have the same correctness in the greater number of instances. Of the ensuing allegation, also, briefly that Bacon is stiff and formal, and Shakespeare without constraint, it is only necessary to say, this being a part of the "mind and style" indictment, that it is permitted to Machiavel to be stiff and formal in his treatise, *The Prince*, and free and easy in his comedy, *The Mandragola*. But Mr. White appears to think that if Bacon were the author of Shakespeare, his inquiry into the nature of heat would necessarily be written in the style of *Twelfth Night*! He next gives us Shakespeare as "a player and quibbler" with words, in absolute contrast with Bacon, who in this very *Promus* appears in precisely that character, twisting "good matin" out of "good morning," and "good soir" out of "good evening," and up to every variety of verbal prestidigitation! Then we come upon "Bacon without humor; Shakespeare's smiling lips the mouthpiece of

humor for all human kind." Bacon without humor! In the name of Momus, Comus, and Pantagruel, what Bacon did Mr. White read about! His oratory was "nobly censorious," says Ben Jonson, "when he could spare or pass by a jest." "He was abundantly facetious, which took much with the queen," says his contemporary, Sir Robert Naunton. Bacon without humor! He goes into an Elizabethan garden, where there is a great number of nude statues, throws up his hands, and exclaims, "The resurrection!" "I wish your Lordship a good Easter," says the Spanish Jew, Gondomar, about to cross the Channel. "I wish you a good Pass-over," replies Bacon. There is no better jest in Shakespeare! In fact, Bacon's humor, as Ben Jonson notes, was absolutely predominant in his intellectual make-up. I have a mind to step over the reviewer's next hop-scotch square; its discrimination of Shakespeare from Bacon, as poet by accident and muck-rake by design, is so silly and contemptible. It is enough to say of it that the evidence of noble and massive moral purpose in the Shakespeare drama is too decisive to comport with his assertion that its author wrote it only for the sake of "giving pleasure to others and getting money for himself." Did Mr. White expect us to believe that we owe the creation of Hamlet to the animus of Barnum? Next we have a Bacon set in opposition to Shakespeare as habitually "shrinking from gen-

eralization." What, pray, are the aphorisms of the *Novum Organum*? We land at the New Atlantis, — we look down those illimitable avenues of Bensalem, — we gaze upon those shining façades, those rich sculptures, those glorious and stupendous piles, those long arrays of magnificent generalizations; and our dapper cicerone, Signor Bianco, informs us that this architect never generalized! His succeeding description of Shakespeare as a synthesist, and Bacon as only an analyst, is worthy of the same guide. As if the *Novum Organum* were not a creation, — as if those cloud-capt towers, those gorgeous palaces, those solemn temples, looming over the future of mankind, were not a work to stand with the cathedrals and the pyramids forever! Next we have Bacon, "a highly trained mind," and Shakespeare "wholly untrained;" this in the face of Ben Jonson's signal panegyric on Shakespeare's mastership in poetic "art" as something distinctly apart from his natural endowment (see the prologue to the first folio); his declaration that as a poet he was "made as well as born;" his express testimony that his "living line" came as much through discipline and culture as through genius; his especial glorification of the work as an army of Knowledge advancing against Ignorance; this in the face, too, of the fact that his "wholly untrained" mind shows in his drama all that universities were built to confer, — the drilled proficiency in

all the learning of the time, whatever its defects or limitations, and in all its varieties, including law! "Wholly untrained," indeed! Go to, now! let the Baconian smile! Let him relax the zygomatic muscle! Nor will his face grow less like the mask of antique Comedy under Mr. White's closing parallel, in which Bacon is exhibited as "utterly without the poetic faculty even in a secondary degree," while Shakespeare rises "with unconscious effort to the highest heaven of poetry ever reached by the human mind!" Bacon utterly without the poetic faculty! One remembers such a sentence as this: "There is no exquisite beauty without some strangeness in its proportions." Or as that upon the prehistoric origin of the Hellenic myths, in which Bacon calls them "sacred relics, — gentle whispers and the breath of better times, which from the traditions of more ancient nations came at length into the flutes and trumpets of the Greeks." Or as this from the second essay on Death, solemn, dark, and consoling in thought and cadence as the music of a Gregorian chant: "Death arrives gracious to such as sit in darkness, or lie heavy-burdened with grief and irons; to the poor Christian that sits bound in the galley; to despairful widows, pensive prisoners, and deposed kings; to them whose fortune runs back, and whose spirits mutiny; unto such death is a redeemer, and the grave a place for retiredness and rest." But why mul-



tiply instances in rebuttal? The charge is best met by the vast crescent smile it evokes upon the visage of the student of Verulam. And when one thinks of the mighty imagination of Bacon; of that rich prose, surcharged with ideality, flowering, despite its themes, into Shakespearean loveliness; above all, when one thinks of the great upper region to which the spirit is caught under the spell of those transcendent aphorisms of the *Organum*, it would be hard indeed not to let one's face become like a French *pierrot's* to see such an author set down as "utterly without the poetic faculty even in a secondary degree!" Far different is the note sounded by a critic who ranks Mr. White in every particular, including knowledge of the mental constitution of the man he is writing about. I ask attention to the following masterly passage from Taine's incomparable *History of English Literature*:—

Among this band of scholars, philosophers, and dreamers is Francis Bacon, a great and luminous intellect, one of the finest of this poetic progeny, who like his predecessors, was naturally disposed to clothe his ideas in the most splendid garb;—in this age a thought did not seem complete until it had received form and color. But what distinguishes him from the others is, that with him an image only serves to concentrate meditation. He reflected long, stamped on his mind all the parts and joints of his subject, and then, instead of dissipating his complete idea in a graduated chain of reasoning, he embodies it in a comparison so expressive, exact, transparent, that behind his figure we perceive all the details of the idea, like a liquor in a fair crystal vase.

This is his mode of thought, by symbols, not by analysis; instead of explaining his idea, he transposes and translates it—

translates it entire to the smallest details, closing all in the majesty of a grand period, or in the brevity of a striking sentence. Thence springs a style of admirable richness, gravity, and vigor, now solemn and symmetrical, now concise and piercing, always elaborate and full of color.

Thence is derived also his manner of conceiving of things. He is not a dialectician, like Hobbes or Descartes, apt in arranging ideas, in educing one from another, in leading his reader from the simple to the complex by an unbroken chain. The matter being explored, he says to us : "Such it is ; touch it not on that side, it must be approached from the other." Nothing more ; no proof, no effort to convince ; he affirms and does nothing more ; *he has thought in the manner of artists and poets, and he speaks after the manner of prophets and seers*. "Cogita et Visa," this title of one of his books, might be the title of all. The most admirable, the "Novum Organum," is a string of aphorisms — a collection, as it were, of scientific decrees, as of an oracle who foresees the future and reveals the truth. And to make the resemblance complete, he expresses them by poetical figures, by enigmatic abbreviations, almost by Sibylline verses. Shakespeare and the seers do not contain more vigorous and expressive condensations of thought, more resembling inspiration, and in Bacon they are to be found everywhere.

It will be seen from this magnificent passage, that Taine does not set Bacon so very widely apart from Shakespeare in the nature of his mind — indeed, one might almost think he was considering the two as one. It will also be seen that he does not sustain Mr. White at all in regard to Bacon's "poetic faculty." The truth is that despite his reputation as a textual scholar, Mr. Richard Grant White knew very little about either Bacon or Shakespeare, a fact of which his parallel furnishes decisive evidence. The capstone of his absurdity in the article is the conclusion, where he exalts the "untaught son of

the Stratford yeoman " as a " miraculous miracle that does not defy or suspend the laws of nature." " A miraculous miracle " is rather tautological tautology, especially for a purist in words, as Mr. White was. Could a phrase more witless well be imagined? — complacently offered, too, as the solution of the Shakespeare anomalies!

The solution, however, is one which will hardly be accepted. In this age, we believe in no miracles outside of religion, especially miraculous miracles. Despite the strenuous efforts of certain fair-minded gentlemen to choke off debate, the question of the authorship of the Shakespeare drama is at length squarely mooted. On this question, Francis Bacon at last fronts William Shakespeare, and let the Shakespeareans ignore the fact as they may, there is a growing public conviction that the master of Gorhambury fills the bill. In him the Shakespearean conditions are felt to be fairly met. His great personal beauty in youth, his beauty and majesty in age, make him, at the very outset, the Orlando containing Prospero we would wish to know was the true Shakespeare. The broad tranquil brow, the mane of soft dark hair, the sweet jesting mouth and living eyes, the pure May bloom, the love, the kindness, the woman's subtle wisdom and brooding masculine power of the young Verulam of the Hilyard miniature, are lineaments of the kindred charm that draws us in that earlier work, so gay, so good, so deep — the

*As You Like It*, the *Twelfth Night*, the *Midsummer Night's Dream*; while the *Coriolanus*, the *Julius Cæsar*, the *Othello*, the *Macbeth*, the *Tempest*, and all those powerful tableaux of history and passion which belong to later years, fall no less into natural relation with that lofty and gracious presence, which even his contemporary, the sour-eyed cynic, Osborne, who looked on few persons or things with favor, says "struck all men with an awful reverence." That presence is felt alike in the *Tempest* and in the *Novum Organum*, and in both cases, so strong is our impression of the moral and intellectual elevation of the author, it is a presence that would seem to be less within the sphere of the creation, than presiding over it. It is true of Bacon, what Charles Emerson so finely said of Shakespeare, "he sits above the hundred-handed play of his imagination, pensive and conscious." In him are combined the splendor of genius, the grandeur of spirit, the wealth of learning, the variety of experience we naturally require as correlative to the Shakespeare plays. He has comprehended the globe and the world — nature and men; he has had the strength of soul to rise in his survey to the height universal; he has fed on the lion's marrow of the great books of all ages; he has been everywhere; he has seen everything. He knows England. He has lived in Paris, where the continental streams meet. He has visited the

French provinces. He has been to Rome, then the intellectual centre of Europe, and he has travelled long in Italy. He has had the opportunities for that intimate foreign knowledge, which in the Shakespeare plays reached even, as Armitage Brown shows, to acquaintance with the local law of French and Italian towns. He has been a great lawyer, so great, so steeped in the lore of law, that his contemporary Harvey flings at him that "he writes philosophy like a Lord Chancellor," — meaning that his legal training appears in his other work, which is true, too, of the Shakespeare drama, where the vast and accurate knowledge of law, and still more significant, the strange bias toward the law for allusions and images, are even more apparent. He has had the view-point for strange insights. He has seen, as the Stratford burgher might have seen, a man's heart, torn from his living breast by the executioner and flung into the fire; leap into the air and fall back into the flames; but he has looked upon sights more reserved and terrible — he has gazed into the bosoms of kings, the minds of statesmen, the lives of nobles, the smug and accepted hells of morals and politics, against which his whole instauration is a divine conspiracy. He has been the companion and counsellor of princes; he has seen the ways and learned the language of actors, sailors, gypsies, tinkers, grooms, as well. He has been clairvoyant of everything — the men, the elements, the



birds, the beasts, the insects ; modes, substances, dreams, sympathies, forces ; all that is, does, seems, moves, operates. Read his *Sylva Sylvarum*. He has suffered. He has had the experience of the Elizabethan and the human suffering. For many years he was followed by disaster. He has felt the whips and scorns of time, the wrong done by the oppressor, the contumely thrown upon the poor man by the proud, the pangs of love disprized, the law's delay, the insolence of officials, the spurns patient merit has to bear even from the most unworthy. He has drank deep of life, and all its sorrow and its joy. Withal, he is a poet — such by his own jesting confession, and by vague tacit general understanding. He speaks of himself in his letter to Sir John Davies as a “concealed poet.” He is described by a contemporary poet, George Withers, as “Lord Chancellor of Parnassus” — Parnassus, the mount of poetry ! Sir Tobie Matthew, writing to him from Paris, probably in reference to some of those secret “works of my recreation” Bacon was fond of sending him in manuscript, gayly says he “will not promise to return him weight for weight, but Measure for Measure.” Ben Jonson, who was in his secrets and knew all about him, giving in his *Discoveries* an account of the leading orators, writers, and poets of the time in England (and never mentioning Shakespeare), puts him above all as “the mark and acme of our language,” and says it “is he

that hath filled up all numbers"—take notice! — all numbers! — "and performed that in our tongue which may be compared or preferred either to insolent Greece or haughty Rome." Clearly, an Olympian man.

On the other hand, we have William Shakespeare. The tinted Stratford bust, which so great a sculptor as Chantrey scrutinized and thought taken from a death-mask, shows us how he looked. A fat fellow, sturdy, comely, fresh-colored, blobber-cheeked, no neck, a mouth full of tongue, a ten-per-center's forehead, the funniest perky little nose, a length of upper lip which is a deformity, and on it two droll little flat curls of moustache, supplemented by a short point of imperial on the chin. Lavater, pausing before the effigy with the Shakespeare volume in his hand, would say: "That never wrote this!" Such was his appearance. For an account of his actions, we are indebted to the painful diligence of the Shakespeare Society. *Par-turient montes*. The historical mountain has labored and produced the biographical mouse. The child of low degree; born and brought up at Stratford, then, as Halliwell-Phillips has shown, one of the meanest and filthiest towns in England; butcher's boy, poacher, link-boy, horse-boy, play-actor, theatrical manager; such up to middle life is his record. He amassed wealth, probably like his fellow actor, Edward Alleyn, by money-lending and shrewd speculating; eventually re-

tired to Stratford ; bought the best house ; and lived with an income of at least twenty thousand dollars a year, present values. He had a keen eye to the main chance, and sued for and recovered money owed him. He had three children, whom he brought up in complete ignorance ; his daughter Judith could not even sign her name. He produced no plays at Stratford, but he continued the tradition of his grand comedies, as follows :—

*Epitaph on Tom-a-Combe, otherwise Thinbeard.*

Thin in beard and thick in purse,  
Never man beloved worse ;  
He went to the grave with many a curse ;  
The Devil and he had both one nurse.

There is also the Attic morceau, as poor Miss Bacon called it, on John - a - Combe, done in the broad Warwickshire brogue, as the point shows :—

*Epitaph on John-a-Combe, a covetous rich man.*

Ten in the hundred lies here engraved ;  
'T is a hundred to ten his soul is not saved ;  
If any one asks, " Who lies in this tomb ? "  
Ho ! ho ! quoth the Devil, "'t is my John-a-Combe ! "

[John ha' coom : John has come.]

The power that had produced the great tragedies, as creation puts forth worlds, *Timon*, *Cymbeline*, *Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Othello*, clearly survived in the more serious effusions of his muse. For example :—

*Epitaph on Elias James.*

When God was pleased, the world unwilling yet,  
Elias James to nature paid his debt,

And here reposeth ; as he lived, he died ;  
 The saying in him strongly verified —  
 Such life, such death ; then the known truth to tell,  
 He lived a godly life and died as well.

Another instance : —

*Epitaph on Sir Thomas Stanley.*

Ask who lies here but do not weep ;  
 He is not dead, he doth but sleep ;  
 This stony register is for his bones,  
 His fame is more perpetual than these stones,  
 And his own goodness with himself being gone,  
 Shall live when earthly monument is none.

Not monumental stone preserves our fame,  
 Nor sky-aspiring pyramid our name ;  
 The memory of him for whom this stands  
 Shall outlive marble and defacer's hands ;  
 When all to Time's consumption shall be given,  
 Stanley for whom this stands shall stand in Heaven.

This poetry is from the same source whence flowed, in sombre sweetness, the grand, the dark and melancholy stream of *Hamlet* !

In the intervals of producing these gems, of which there are a number, their author lived a profane and vulgar life, as Emerson justly calls it. Even tradition fails to give the least sparkle of spirituality, the least sign of moral elevation, to those years of opulence at Stratford, as to the years before them. His most notable act was to obtain on two occasions by flagrant fraud, with the complicity of the Garter King of Arms, a gross rascal, named John Dethick, a grant of armorial bearings to which he had no right whatever ; a transaction which caused bitter

complaint against the management of the Herald's College, although it refused to confirm Dethick's action in both instances. For the rest, he ate, drank, caroused, slept; he speculated in tithes, in land, and steadily fattened. He never published his plays, nor made any claim to their authorship, then or at any time. Mr. White has the effrontery to say in the article, that in his lifetime he claimed them as his. He never at any time made the faintest claim to their authorship; never! He never set up any title to them, and they were first published in collected form, affiliated upon his name, seven years after his death, in 1623, the same time in which Bacon was collecting and publishing his works in their final form for posterity. He had no books. His will shows the fact. He leaves houses, lands, messuages, orchards, gardens, wearing-apparel, furniture, a sword, a silver and gilt punch-bowl, a second-best bed for his wife, — no books. He had twenty thousand dollars a year and not a volume. The man who wrote *Love's Labor's Lost*, so learned, so academic, so scholastic in expression and allusion that it is unfit for popular representation, — the man whose ample page is rich with the transfigured spoils of ages, — that man lived without a library! Finally, in 1616, he died of a fever, the result of a drunken orgy at Stratford with some congenial tosspots. This, in brief, is his record; a record unadorned by a single excellence or virtue. Before it, thought-



ful men stand in utter perplexity. Hallam, an elegant and judicious mind, regards it with petulant disquietude. Guizot, a profound and penetrating intellect, notes it with a certain mystified curiosity. Coleridge recoils from it with anger and disgust, and declares that such a creature could not have written the drama. "Does God choose idiots to convey truths to man!" he cries with indignation. You would say that he glared at the indisputable biography, enraged that it does not offer one single point of correspondence, however small, with the spirit of the plays.

Such are the two men, Bacon and Shakespeare, who appear in connection with a question of authorship which is in fact an enigma. The first belongs to the drama as though he were one of its lordliest characters; the second, by every fact known of him, is a grotesque anomaly. So little can this be denied that men are driven, like Mr. White, to explain the palpable Shakespearean incongruity by the assertion of "miraculous miracle."

Enough. But after what has been said, it is hoped that Mr. White's review will not continue to impose upon guileless readers, nor to wreak further mischief upon a volume which is a lasting monument to the patient labor, the clear-sighted scholarship, and the genius of its editor and author. Had Mrs. Pott been less thorough and faithful, she could have produced a work which would have been simply invincible. She has

chosen to present Bacon's manuscript entire, and to append to its members all the varieties of illustrations which the Shakespeare pages afford; some of the connections being thus most readily appreciable by the philologist, the grammarian, or the connoisseur of style; some also being shadowy, recondite, and indirect, and becoming apparent mainly by operations of reasoning, circuitous and subtle like Bacon's own. Her book has consequently been relegated to the consideration of students rather than readers, and its success, which might have been immediate, has become an affair of years instead of hours. Had she chosen rather to make a selection from the *Promus* of the considerable mass of entries and illustrations, similar to those I have cited on an early page, where the relation or identity is obvious and indisputable, she would have been less just to her subject in its totality, but her book would have carried instant and irresistible conviction. As it is, it will be sure to make its way. The time is rapidly coming when literary bladders and persifleurs will not be able on the Bacon-Shakespeare question to make a mock of evidence, as Mr. White did in his insolent review. If opportunity favored, I should like to point out in detail the singular value and significance of the *Promus* as a document in an extraordinary problem, the solution of which probably involves the reintegration of a great though dismembered philosophy, the

identification with it of works that wander half unknown and only partly understood because of their present disconnection, and the opening of some of the great secret books of that age and the preceding European ages. It is a work which no student of Shakespeare or Bacon can afford to turn from, and it is the crowning error of any literary bigot's life if he imagines that its force can be broken or its light quenched by a shallow and brazen commentary, studded with reckless and ridiculous violations of text and truth.









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